

LANDSCAPE & VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Cúirt na Coiribe Development, Galway

March 2020

Issue 4



1 Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment

1.1 Introduction

The landscape and visual impact assessment was conducted by The Big Space landscape architects to assess the potential impacts of the proposed development on the surrounding landscape. The landscape and visual impact assessment examines and evaluates the implications of the proposed scheme in terms of landscape character and visual alterations arising from the scheme. The assessment also describes outline landscape treatment proposals to mitigate and attempt to achieve a longer-term integration of the proposed development with its surrounding landscape area.

1.2 Assessment Methodology

The procedure used for the landscape and visual assessment entailed:

- A desk top study of the site in relation to its overall context both locally and regionally.
- Visiting the site and its environs to assess the following:
 - Quality and type of views of the area
 - The character and quality of the site area and the surrounding landscape

1.2.1 Guidelines

The structure for assessing the landscape impact of the proposed development is based upon the following guidelines:

- Draft Guidelines on the information to be contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports (*EPA, July 2017*)
- Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (*Landscape Institute & I.E.M.A., UK 2013*)

The criteria for describing the significance, quality and duration of the effects of the proposed development are outlined in Table 1 below:

| Significance of Effects | Criteria |
|-------------------------|---|
| Imperceptible | An effect capable of measurement but without significant consequences. |
| Not significant | An effect which causes noticeable changes in the character of the environment but without significant consequences. |
| Slight Effects | An effect which causes noticeable changes in the character of the environment without affecting its sensitivities. |
| Moderate Effects | An effect that alters the character of the environment in a manner that is consistent with existing and emerging baseline trends. |
| Significant Effects | An effect which, by its character, magnitude, duration or intensity alters a sensitive aspect of the environment. |
| Very Significant | An effect which, by its character, magnitude, duration or intensity significantly alters most of a sensitive aspect of the environment. |
| Profound Effects | An effect which obliterates sensitive characteristics |
| Quality of Effects | Criteria |

| | |
|--|---|
| Positive Effects | A change which improves the quality of the environment (for example, by increasing species diversity; or the improving reproductive capacity of an ecosystem, or by removing nuisances or improving amenities). |
| Neutral Effects | No effects or effects that are imperceptible, within normal bounds of variation or within the margin of forecasting error. |
| Negative/adverse Effects | A change which reduces the quality of the environment (for example, lessening species diversity or diminishing the reproductive capacity of an ecosystem; or damaging health or property or by causing nuisance). |
| Duration and Frequency of Effects | Criteria |
| Momentary Effects | Effects lasting from seconds to minutes |
| Brief Effects | Effects lasting less than a day |
| Temporary Effects | Effects lasting less than a year |
| Short-term Effects | Effects lasting one to seven years. |
| Medium-term Effects | Effects lasting seven to fifteen years. |
| Long-term Effects | Effects lasting fifteen to sixty years. |
| Permanent Effects | Effects lasting over sixty years |
| Reversible Effects | Effects that can be undone, for example through remediation or restoration |

Table 1: Landscape – Visual Assessment Criteria (as per Draft Guidelines on the information to be contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports (EPA - July 2017))

1.2.2 Photomontages

A series of photomontages were prepared by 3D Design Bureau to represent, as accurately as possible, the physical and visual characteristics of the proposed development from a variety of distances and directions around the site. Priority was given to views from the public domain, such as main roads and to views from potentially sensitive locations such as residential areas. The location of all views are shown on Figures 10 and 11 and within Appendix 1.2. For each of the visuals, an existing and a proposed view is presented and where the proposed development is not visible in the view the elements of the development will be shown as a red outline.

1.3 Receiving Environment

1.3.1 Landscape Context & Site Description

The subject site covers an area of approximately 1.41ha and is located within the townland of Terryland, approximately 1 km to the north of Galway city centre. The subject site currently consists of a number of inter-connected blocks, varying in height from two to four storeys (five counting the attic level) which accommodate a student residence of 405Nr beds (also with summer letting as tourist accommodation) and a restaurant, arranged around two centrally linked courtyards. A basement car park, surface car parking and ancillary services structures are also incorporated within the subject site. The land within the subject site falls gently from 6.20m A.O.D. (north-west corner) and 5.70m A.O.D. (south-west corner) to 5.60m A.O.D. (north-east corner) and 5.50m A.O.D. (south-east corner).

The entrance to the subject site is off the Dun na Coiribe Road, which is located along the eastern boundary of the site and this road links with the N6 primary road, just north of Bodkin junction (N6 – Headford Road – R338). The N6 to the east of the subject site, forms part of the main corridor between Dublin and Galway and also links with the N59 which is the main route for travelling through Connemara. The subject site is served by the 407 bus route which travels from Galway city centre to Bóthar an Chóiste. Galway city train station (Ceannt Station), which is located approximately 2km to the south of the site, provides rail links with Dublin, Ennis, Limerick, Athlone and Athenry. Shannon airport which operates both domestic and international flights, is located approximately 85km south of the site. The Corrib River is located less than 1km from the subject site to the west and south west of the site. The main campus of NUI Galway is located approximately 1.5km to the west of the subject site.

The entrance to the subject site is located along the eastern boundary off the Dun na Coiribe Road, which provides pedestrian access and two vehicular access points, one to the basement car park and to other to the parking area at the rear of Scotty's restaurant. Further east there is a small parcel of the Terryland Forest Park, which is bound by the N6 and the Dun na Coiribe Road. The northern, western and southern boundaries of the subject site are defined by a metal fence with tree and hedge planting. The Gort na Coiribe Student Accommodation/ Holiday Village is located immediately to the north of the subject site. Lands associated with the Terryland Waterworks are located to the west and the Dun na Coiribe residential development is located to the south of the subject site.

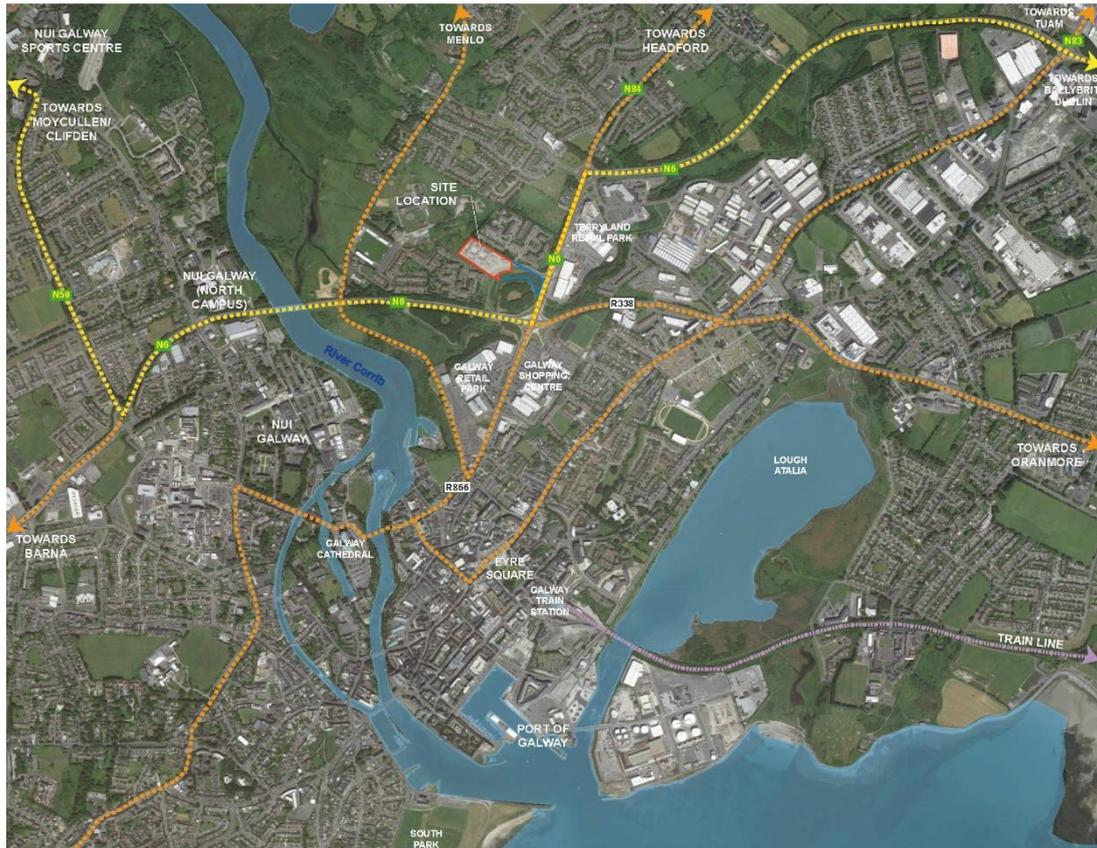


Figure 1.2: Site Location & Wider Context



Figure 1.1: Site Location & Local Context

1.3.2 Existing Trees and Hedgerows

The existing vegetation within the subject site is largely confined to the periphery of the site, with tree and leylandii (*Cupressus x leylandii*) hedge planting along the northern and parts of the southern site boundaries. There are some pockets of mixed species tree and ornamental shrub planting close to the north and south elevations of the buildings and along the eastern boundary which forms the entrance to the development. It is estimated that all the planting within the subject site was carried out within the last 15 years.

1.3.3 Planning Policy Context and Designations

Land Use Zoning

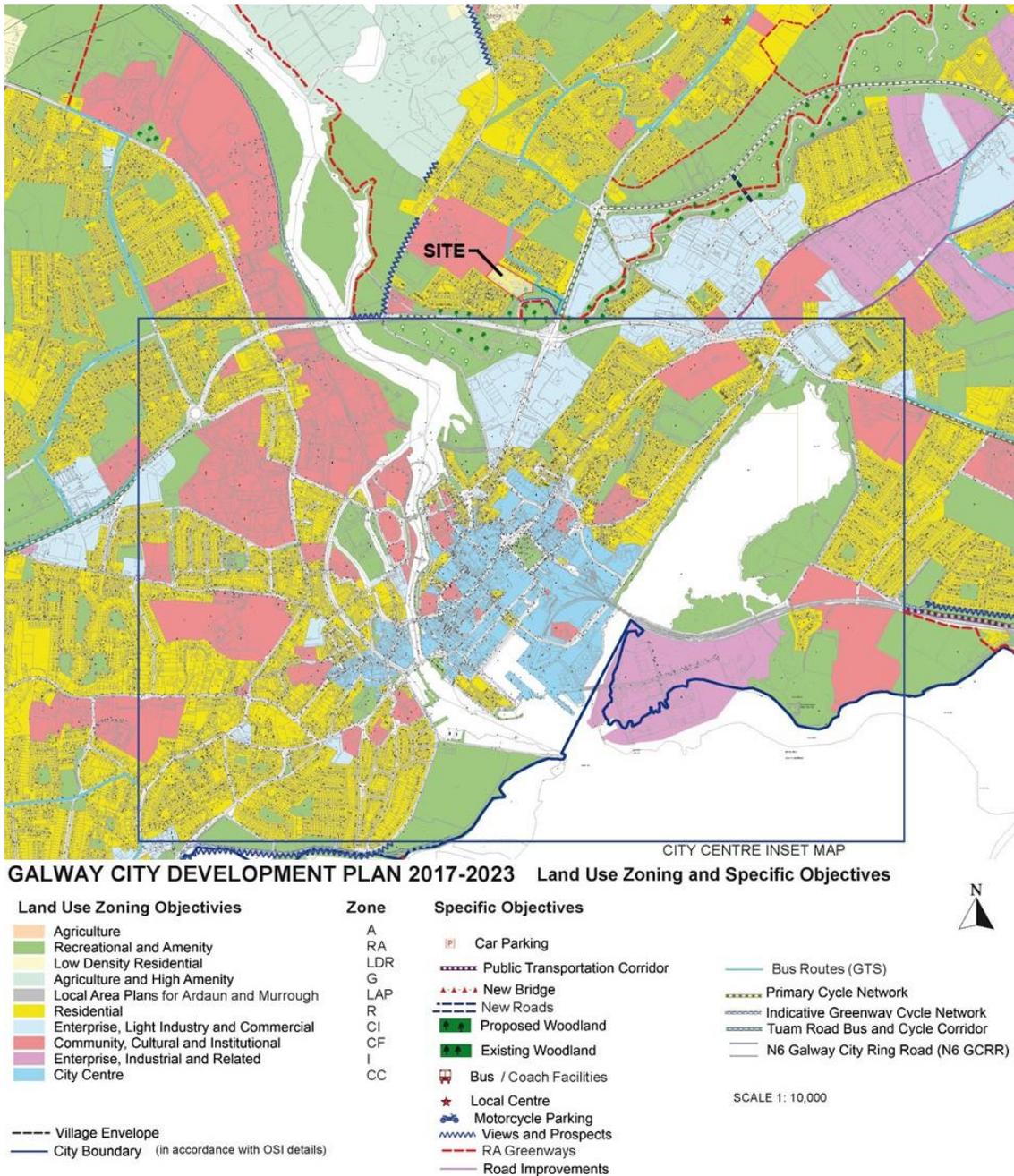


Figure 1.3: Land Use Zoning & Specific Objectives. Source: Galway City Development Plan 2017-2023 & annotated by The Big Space, 2019

The Galway City Development Plan (GCDP) 2017-2023 indicates that the subject site is located with an area zoned as 'Residential', which has the objective:

"To provide for residential development and for associated support development, which will ensure the protection of existing residential amenity and will contribute to sustainable residential neighbourhoods."
(Source: GCDP 2017-2023, pg. 164)

A small portion of the subject site that is to contain the stormwater detention basin associated with the development's SuDS proposals, is located within land zoned as 'Recreational Amenity' (RA). The RA zoning has the following objective:

'To provide for and protect recreational uses, open space, amenity uses and natural heritage.'

The subject site is located within the 'Established Suburbs' zone indicated in the GCDP 2017-2023 which is associated with the following policy:

"Policy 2.6 Established Suburbs

- Ensure a balance between the reasonable protection of the residential amenities and the character of the established suburbs and the need to provide for sustainable residential development.
- Encourage additional community and local services and residential infill development in the established suburbs at appropriate locations.
- Enhance established suburbs, such as the Mervue residential area, through the implementation of environmental improvement schemes and the protection of all open spaces including existing green spaces."(Source: GCDP 2017-2023, pg. 34)

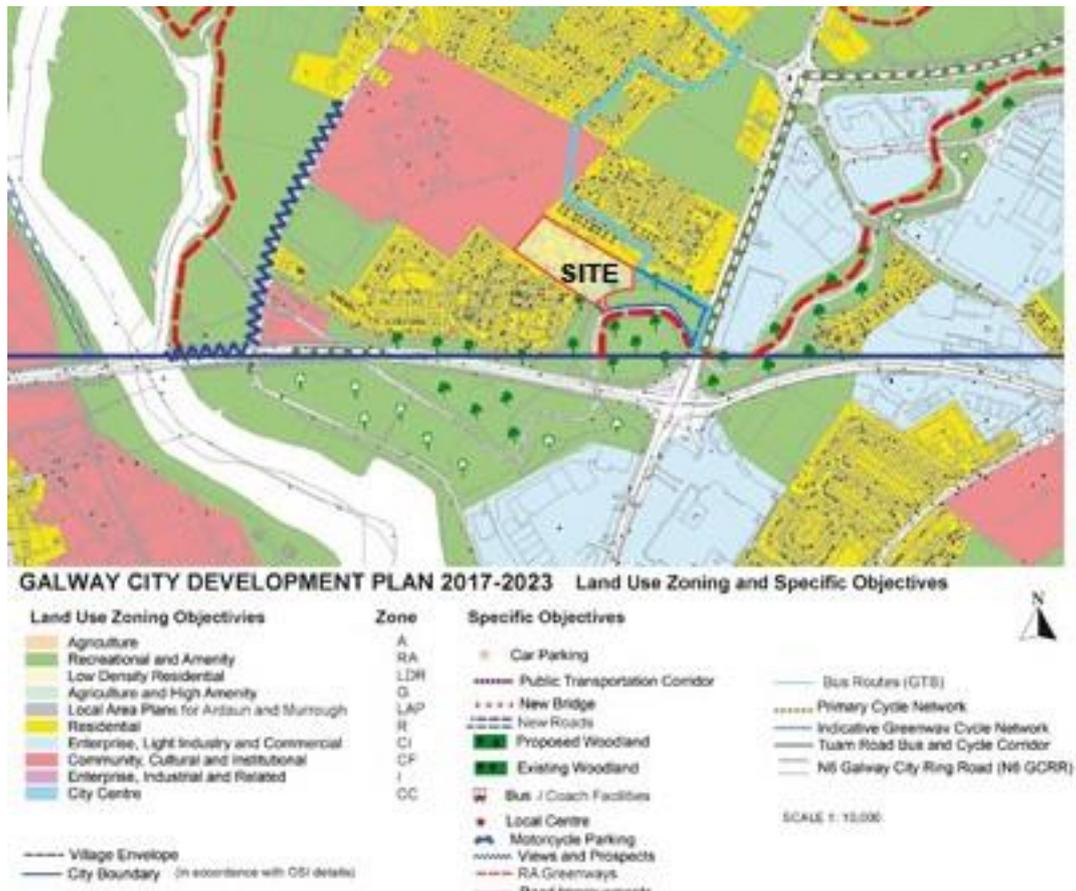


Figure 1.4: : Land Use Zoning & Specific Objectives (extract only). Source: Galway City Development Plan 2017-2023 & annotated by The Big Space, 2019

Green Infrastructure

In relation to green infrastructure, the GCDP 2017-2023 states that its aim is:

“To provide for a green network in the city that allows for the sustainable use, management and protection of natural heritage, recreation amenity areas, parks and open spaces in an integrated manner. The green network will ensure the protection of nature and provide for the enhancement and expansion of passive and active recreational opportunities. It will be accessible to all and by sustainable modes of transport, where feasible. Ensure better integration of environmental and natural resource considerations in the Development Plan through the SEA process and provide the highest level of protection for European Sites, taking account of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive.”

(Source: GCDP 2017-2023, pg. 58)

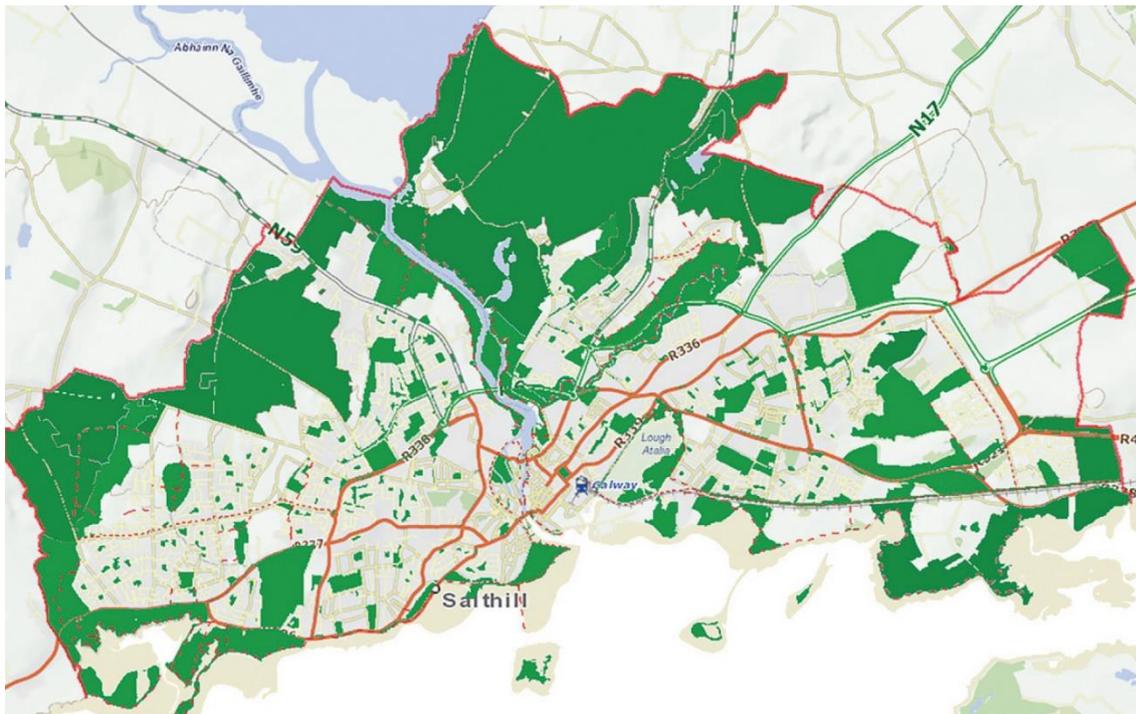


Figure 1.5: Green Network (Source: GCDP 2017-2023)

Below is an extract of some of the items that the GCDP 2017-2023 refers to as part of 'Policy 4.1 Green Network':

- *“Support sustainable use and management of areas of ecological importance, parks and recreation amenity areas and facilities through an integrated green network policy approach in line with Galway City Recreation and Amenity Needs Study, where it can be demonstrated that there will be no adverse impacts on the integrity of European Sites.*
- *Provide adequate recreation and amenity open space for the future development of the city.*
- *Achieve a sustainable balance between meeting future recreational needs (both passive and active) and the preservation of the city’s ecological and cultural heritage.*
- *Continue to acquire and develop lands zoned for recreation and amenity use. These lands will be used predominately for public use, but opportunities for public/private partnerships will also be investigated where a high standard of recreation facility can be developed and where opportunities for public access is provided.*
- *Improve accessibility to the City Parks, recreation and amenity areas and facilities and include for sustainable modes of transport, including the measures proposed in the Galway Transport Strategy.*
- *Retain, extend and enhance opportunities for recreation within the green network for all members of the community including people with disabilities.*

- Support the participation of the city in the WHO Healthy Cities Project and its aim to enhance the health of the city, its environment and its people.
- Support the actions of the City Council's Heritage Plan 2016-2021 and Biodiversity Action Plan 2014-2024 relating to the promotion of ecological awareness and biodiversity.
- Co-operate with the NPWS, landowners and stakeholders in the preparation and implementation of management plans for designated sites.
- Promote the multi-use of indoor and outdoor (both private and public) recreation and leisure facilities and amenities to accommodate a diverse range of recreational needs.
- Enhance linkages and connectivity within the green network
- Promote public art, cultural events and exhibitions, as an important part in the design of facilities and amenities.
- Ensure that all passive and active recreational proposals are considered in the context of potential impact on the environment, sites of ecological and biodiversity importance and general amenity.)

(Source: GCDP 2017-2023, pg. 62)

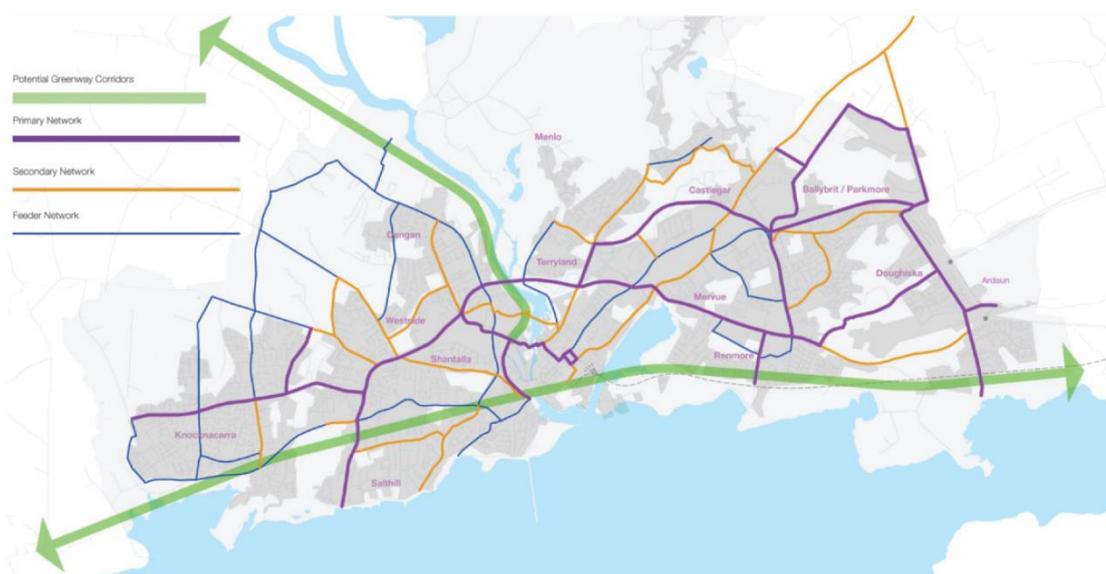


Figure 1.6: Proposed Cycling Network (Source: GCDP 2017-2023)

Landscape Character

The area surrounding the subject site is composed primarily of similar residential developments, as expected of a location so near to the city centre and NUI Galway. While the site is located within close proximity to a busy road corridor (N6) and largescale retail and commercial parks, the large parcel of amenity land that forms part of Terryland Forest Park, located to the east of the site, acts as a buffer between the residential areas and the surrounding infrastructure and large scale development.

Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) & Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC):

A Landscape Character Assessment for Galway was published in 2015 and it indicates that the subject site is located between two Landscape Character Areas: LCA 9 - Inveran to Galway City coastline and LCA 11 - Lough Corrib and environs, as shown in Figure 7 and summarised in Table 2.

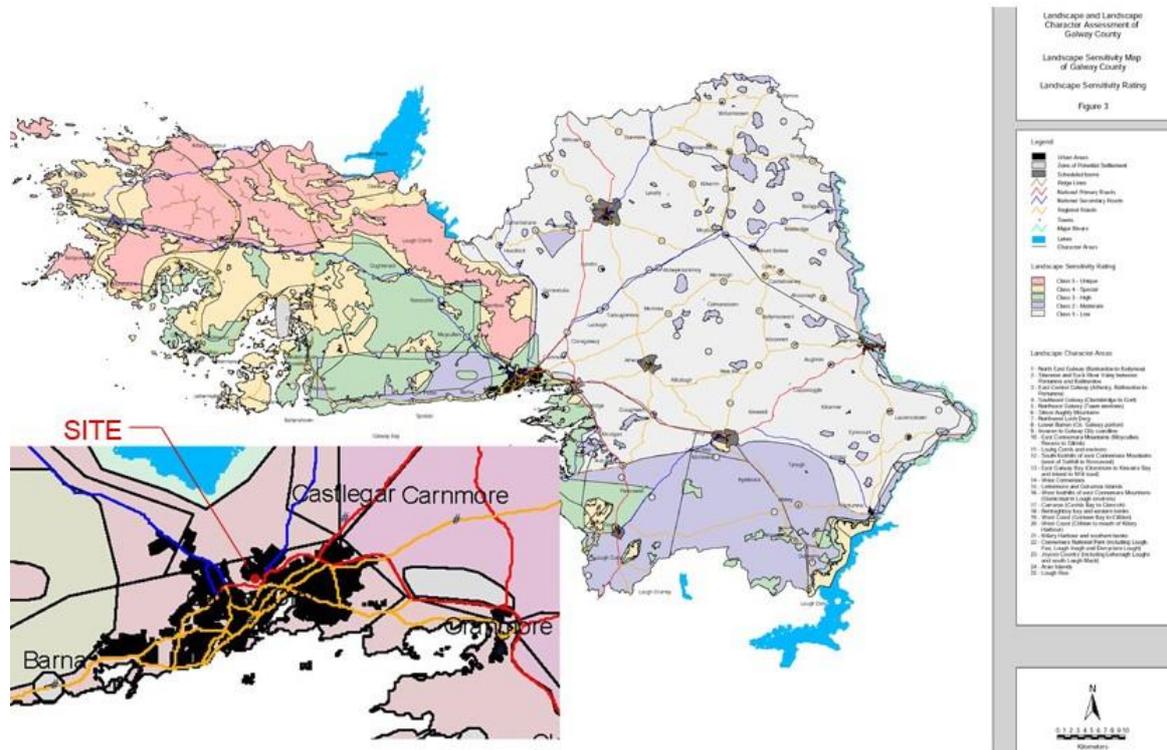


Figure 1.7: Landscape Sensitivity Map – Landscape Value Rating (with zoom in of site context) Source: Landscape Character Assessment for Galway (2015)

| Landscape Character Area | | Landscape Values: Cultural | Landscape Values: Socio Economic | Landscape Values: Environmental | Landscape Values: Total Rating | Landscape Sensitivity |
|---|----------------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|---|
| 9 | Inveran to Galway City coastline | High | High | High | High | Class 3-High with a parallel strip of Class 4-Special |
| <p><u>Description:</u> the coast is flat, comprising rocks and sand merging with natural grassland towards the R336. The coast line commands striking views of County Clare and the Aran Islands. Further inland from the R336 route, there are residential and some light industrial developments which have lowered the scenic value in this area.</p> | | | | | | |
| <p><u>Recommendations:</u></p> | | | | | | |
| <p>3.24 The coast along this area is scenic and flat with rocks and sand merging with natural grassland. However, views of Galway Bay, North Clare coast and the Aran Islands from the coastal road (R336) have been obscured in many places by mixed development. There are pockets of this landscape which command striking seaward views, hence development of all kinds should be prohibited.</p> | | | | | | |
| <p>3.25 Further development within this area should be grouped in clusters, close to existing settlements and should avoid the seaward side of the R336 road to avoid further visual obstruction of the scenic coastline.</p> | | | | | | |

| | | | | | | |
|--|---------------------------|-------------|--------------------|--------------------|-------------|---|
| <p>3.26 Development within the immediate coastal area such as improved visitor access and parking near to the coast should be sunken and surrounded by natural coastal vegetation for screening. Finishes should be sympathetic to coastal environment i.e. crushed stone and sand.</p> | | | | | | |
| 11 | Lough Corrib and environs | Outstanding | High - Outstanding | High - Outstanding | Outstanding | Class 5- Unique with pockets of classes 3- High and 4 - Special |
| <p><u>Description:</u> Lough Corrib is a wide, dramatic expanse of water including many islands supporting deciduous woodland. The land around the northern part of the Lough is undulating heath, bog and coniferous forestry where as the land surrounding the southern section is flat, open grassland. The landscape of the Lough and its surrounds is highly scenic and includes many facilities for visitors.</p> | | | | | | |
| <p><u>Recommendations:</u></p> | | | | | | |
| <p>3.30 The land around the northern part of the Lough is undulating heath, bog and coniferous forestry; it is highly scenic and includes many facilities for visitors. The landscape of this portion of the area is more natural and undeveloped than in the south and is close to the scenic mountainous areas of Connemara. Development in this area will be visible from the hillside walks of Joyce Country and should where possible be located within existing forestry and natural hollows or finished in materials sympathetic to the surrounding landscape to minimise visual intrusion. Bright, bold or reflective colours should be avoided on a large scale within this expansive natural setting. Suitable materials such as stone and finishes in an earth tone colour are appropriate.</p> | | | | | | |
| <p>3.31 In the south where the land is relatively flat and expansive, elevated views are not available. No further development except that associated with essential housing needs is recommended near to the water edge at Lough Corrib. In the flat open areas (generally class 4), buildings should be low in height and set within clusters, which can be screened by woodland planting. Development should not be of a nature, which would pollute the sensitive waters of the Lough or the water edge environment.</p> | | | | | | |
| <p>3.32 Residential developments should be stonework or rendered in white or other colours that blend sensitively with the rural setting. Any existing paths or parking places for scenic views should be maintained and surfaced using natural materials e.g. timber or crushed stone. Street furniture i.e. seats, fencing, litter bins should be of timber to reflect the rural natural setting of the Lough. Large conspicuous, brightly coloured signs will cause visual intrusion and should be replaced with low-key timber signage.”</p> | | | | | | |

Table 2: Landscape Character Area and Landscape Value Rating. Source: Landscape and Landscape Character Assessment for County Galway (February 2015)

Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC):

No Historic Landscape Characterisation has been undertaken for Galway at this stage.

Views and Prospects

Protected Views, Corridors and Prospects

“Policy 4.5.3 Community Spaces: Protected Views of Special Amenity Value and Interest Protect views and prospects of special amenity value and interest, which contribute significantly to the visual amenity and character of the city through the control of inappropriate development. Require landscaping schemes as part of planning applications to have regard to such views and limit any planting which could have a detrimental impact on the value of protected views.” (Source: GCDP 2017-2023, pg. 73)

There are no protected views, corridors or prospects directly affecting the subject site, the linear protected view that is in close proximity to the site, “V.11 Views from Waterside of the River Corrib” is indicated on Figure 4.

Protected Structures, Recorded Monuments and National Inventory of Architectural Heritage:

Recorded Monuments: Structures that are protected under the National Monuments (Amendment) Act, 1994.

Protected Structure (RPS): Structures that are considered to be of special architectural, historic, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest.

National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH): Inventory of post-1700 architectural heritage of Ireland, carried out to aid in the protection and conservation of the built heritage. NIAH surveys provide the basis for the recommendations of the Minister for Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs to the planning authorities for the inclusion of particular structures in their Record of Protected Structures (RPS).

There are no Protected Structures or Recorded Monuments within the site, the structures and features referred to in Table 3 below are located between 200 – 500m of the subject site:

| Reference | Description |
|---------------------------------|--|
| GA082-083 | Bastioned fort - 200m east of the subject site – dating from the 1600s. |
| RPS No. 3503 | Terryland Castle and NIAH No. GA082-080001- Castle & House – NIAH GA082-080002 - 500m west of the subject site - The original castle dated from the 1500s, however the above ground ruins pertain to a 17th century house. |
| RPS No. 1801 & RM ref.GA082-082 | burial ground – 400m north of the subject site |
| RPS No. 8501 | Rivers/Waterways - Including Bridges, Weirs, Walls, Embankment, Piers & Other Associated Infrastructure, River Corrib |
| RPS No. 3501 & 3502 | Waterworks & Associated Building & NIAH No. 30408208 - Detached L-plan eight-bay single-storey waterworks building, built c.1930. |
| NIAH. No. 30408210 | Single-arch road bridge spanning Terryland River, built c.1910 |
| NIAH No. 30408209 | Detached three-bay single-storey waterworks building, dated 1867, built on double-arch bridge-like structure spanning artificial waterway. |

Table 3: Protected Structures, Recorded Monuments and National Inventory of Architectural Heritage within 200-500m of subject site

1.3.4 Statutory Designations

There are no Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), Special Protection Areas (SPA) and Natural Heritage Areas (NHA) within or in close proximity to the site.

The designated areas closest to the subject site are (refer to Figure 8):

- Lough Corrib Complex SAC and pNHA (Site Code 000297)
- Lough Corrib SPA (Site Code 004042).



Figure 1.8: Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), Special Protection Areas (SPA) and Natural Heritage Areas (NHA). Source: Galway City Development Plan 2017-2023

1.4 Characteristics of the Proposed Development

1.4.1 Description of the Proposed Development

The redevelopment of the subject site will involve:

- demolition of the two-storey building located in the north-eastern corner of the site
- removal of the fifth storey/ attic level of the main building
- retention of the existing restaurant in its current location
- horizontal and vertical extensions to the existing main structure to provide additional student accommodation and associated amenities.

The proposed final scheme will be comprised of:

- 9Nr linked blocks ranging in height from 2-6 storeys, which will accommodate 920Nr bedspaces
- student amenities – internal and external e.g. gym/fitness studio, games room, library/study spaces, multi-functional spaces; café/restaurant, and student lounge spaces
- 59Nr car parking spaces (16Nr surface spaces and 43Nr basement spaces)
- ancillary development in the form of car parking, pathways, lighting and services.

The design approach to the external spaces within the proposed development is to produce a scheme with a strong identity and distinctive sense of place, while successfully integrating and responding to its surroundings. In order to better contribute to the public realm and improve how the development interacts with the wider Dun na Coiribe area, a plaza has been proposed at the entrance to the scheme. The existing courtyards will be revitalised as part of the redevelopment of the subject site, to provide a high-quality external environment for the future residents to relax and socialise within. The planting approach within the subject site is to soften the impact of the proposed hardworks and buildings and to create visual interest and a more human scale to the external areas for the future residents of the buildings. The main components of the landscape strategy are:

- New entrance plaza
- Enhanced courtyards to provide attractive outdoor spaces, recreation and amenity, including seating and lighting elements
- Access to outdoor seating from the existing restaurant, with new canopy.
- Perimeter pathways to provide recreational opportunities, as well as linking the various external areas and courtyards.
- Increased cycle parking spaces
- Tree and hedge shrub planting within, at the entrance and at certain locations around the perimeter of the subject site.
- Playscape elements



Figure 1.9: Landscape Masterplan

1.5 Identification of Likely Impacts of the Development

1.5.1 Impact on Existing Trees and Hedgerows

The design of the redevelopment has retained the existing vegetation where possible, however in order to facilitate the construction of the proposed buildings, roads, car parking, pathways and services, it is likely that the existing vegetation along southern boundary and where the site borders the Dun na Coiribe road to the east, will need to be removed, however every effort will be made to retain healthy trees and hedgerow where possible.

In order to mitigate against the impact of the existing vegetation being removed, a tree and shrub planting programme within the subject site, encompassing the main entrance and the western boundary has been proposed, as shown on drawing 1479_300. During the construction phase the existing trees and vegetation that are to be retained will be protected from construction traffic, material storage, ground level changes and any other disturbances, in accordance with the recommendations set out in BS5837: 2012 and as shown on Appendix 1.1.

The overall impact on the existing vegetation will be moderate and negative during the construction phase. However, as the proposed tree planting matures and become established this will change to slight and negative.

1.5.2 Impact on Landscape Character

The proposed redevelopment of the subject will result in a change to the landscape character which will be most noticeable locally, such as from the Dun na Coiribe residential development to the south, the Gort na Coiribe estate to the north and the amenity lands to the east of the subject site, that forms part of Terryland Forest Park. However, the redevelopment of the subject site will be appropriate to the site's setting, by reason of its close proximity to Galway city centre (1.3km), NUI Galway (1km), several large-scale retail and commercial centres and the main road corridor (N6).

During the construction phase there will be moderate and negative impact on the landscape character of the immediate area around the subject site, due to the necessary presence of site hoarding, lighting, cranes and construction traffic. However, when the site is fully operational and as the proposed vegetation becomes established and matures there will be a slight and negative impact on the local landscape character, as the proposed redevelopment is consistent with its current use and that of the adjoining lands to the north and south.

1.5.3 Impact on Views

General Impacts on Views - Construction Phase & Operational Phase:

Construction Phase:

During the construction phase, the following elements of the proposed development have the potential to cause visual impacts, they will however be short to medium term in duration:

- Temporary site works – hoarding, lighting, cranes, car parking, storage areas
- Construction traffic – dust and emissions
- Tree and vegetation clearance
- Groundworks – cut and fill excavations
- Laying of foundations and site services

Operational Phase:

The principal elements which are likely to give rise to landscape and visual impact visual impact in the long term are:

- Removal of some vegetation
- New structures, extensions and entrance
- Proposed tree and shrub planting

1.5.4 Impact on Visibility into the site

For this visual impact assessment, viewpoints were selected to represent the likely visual impact from a variety of distances and direction around the site. Priority was given to views from the public domain, such as main roads and to views from potentially sensitive locations such as adjacent residential areas. Photomontages were compiled from the viewpoints shown in Figures 10 and 11 (Refer to Appendix 1.2 for Viewpoint Location Maps and all photomontages).

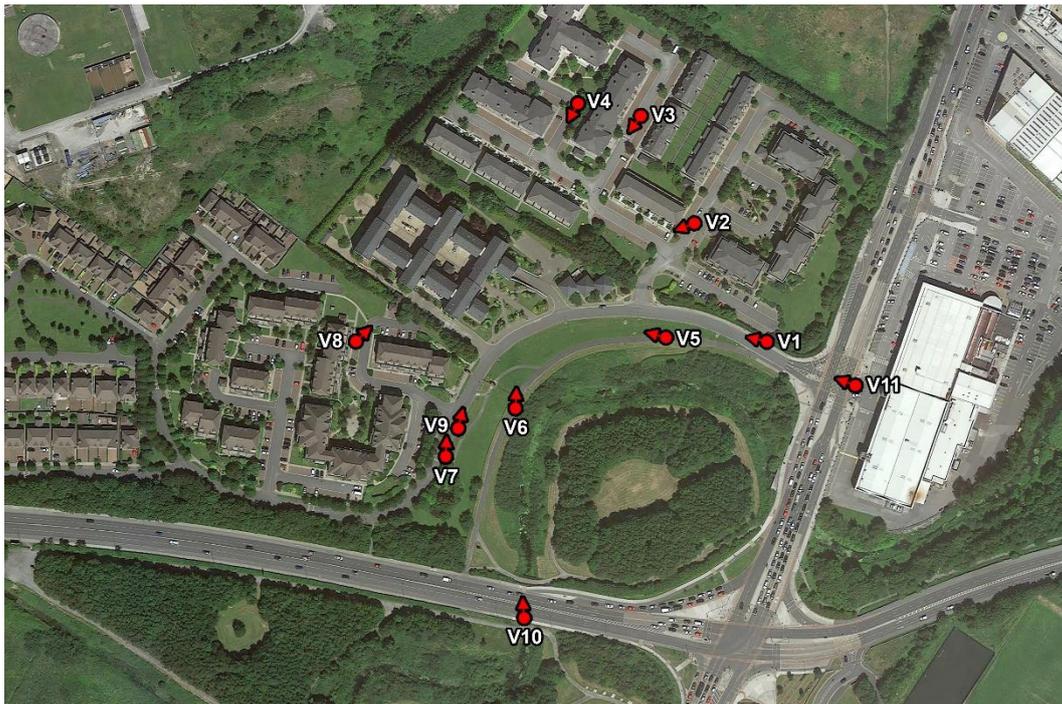


Figure 1.11: Viewpoint Location Map – Short Range Views



Figure 1.10: Viewpoint Location Map – Long Range Views

Visual 1: from the Dun na Coiribe Road looking west

Existing View:

When looking west towards the subject site from this viewpoint on Dun na Coiribe Road, the eastern elevation of and entrance to the existing development is clearly visible. Planting that is located within Terryland Forest Park, south of the Dun na Coiribe Road and the boundary planting associated with Gort na Coiribe residential development frame the view towards the subject site. There are also partial views of the rooftops within the Dun na Coiribe residential development in the background, which is mostly screened by the existing vegetation associated with Terryland Forest Park.

Proposed Changes and Visual Impact:

From this location along the Dun na Coiribe Road the facades of the buildings within the eastern most part of the subject site will be visible due to the lateral and vertical extensions to the existing structures. It is anticipated that the most significant change from this viewpoint will be brought about by redevelopment of the two-storey block into a five-storey structure, increasing the scheme's visual presence from this viewpoint. Further views into the subject site are screened by the existing boundary planting within the Gort na Coiribe development and it is anticipated that as the proposed planting matures it will lessen the impact on views from this location.

During the construction phase the impact on views from this area are expected to be moderate and negative, due to the anticipated increase in construction vehicles, the presence of site hoarding, construction cranes and lighting.

When the subject lands are in the operational phase and the existing and proposed vegetation matures, it is anticipated that the impact on views from this location would lessen to slight and negative, as while there will be a slight change in character caused by the increased visual prominence of the buildings within the subject site, the proposed redevelopment will be appropriate to its setting and its close proximity to Galway city centre.



Plate 1. 1: Visual 1 – Existing



Plate 1. 2: Visual 1 - Proposed

Visual 2: From Gort na Coiribe residential area looking south-west

Existing View:

The existing buildings within the subject site are not visible from this location within the Gort na Coiribe residential area when looking south-west, due to the screening provided by the trees and hedgerows located along this development's boundary with the subject site.

The duplex structures, parking and amenity planting associated with the Gort na Coiribe residential area dominate the foreground and the vegetation located within the Terryland Forest Park is also visible in the background from this viewpoint.

Proposed Changes and Visual Impact:

A small section of the upper floor of the proposed building in the most north-easterly part of the subject site will be visible from this viewpoint, as the majority of the structures will be not visible due to existing well established boundary planting between the subject site and the Gort na Coiribe residential development.

Due to the presence of construction traffic, construction cranes and lighting during the construction phase of the proposed redevelopment, it has the potential to have a slight, negative impact on views from this location, however during the operational phase and as the existing tree and hedge planting continues to mature, this will change to a not significant, negative impact.



Plate 1.3: Visual 2 - Existing



Plate 1.4: Visual 2 - Proposed

Visual 3: From Gort na Coiribe residential area looking south

Existing View:

When looking south towards the subject site from this viewpoint within the Gort na Coiribe residential area, the residential buildings, parking, roads and street tree planting dominate the view. The tree planting that is located along the boundary between this development and the subject site, screens much of the views into the subject site. There is only a small section of a roof apex of an existing building within the subject site, visible in the central background, from this viewpoint.

Proposed Changes and Visual Impact:

While the buildings and existing vegetation along the southern boundary of the Gort na Coiribe development screens much of the views into the subject site, there will be partial views of the upper three floors of the proposed structures within the northern part of the subject site.

Due to the presence of construction traffic, construction cranes, site hoarding and lighting during the construction phase of the proposed redevelopment, it has the potential to have a moderate, negative impact on views from this location.

When the subject lands are in the operational phase it is anticipated that the impact on views from this location will continue to be moderate and negative in the short term and reduce to slight and negative in the long term, as while the proposed development does have an impact on its setting and the skyline from this location, it is consistent with existing developments in the surrounding area.



Plate 1.5: Visual 3 - Existing



Plate 1.6: Visual 3 - Proposed

Visual 4: From Gort na Coiribe residential area looking south

Existing View:

From this location within the Gort na Coiribe residential area looking south towards the subject site, the street tree planting, parking bays, roads and residential buildings with the Gort na Coiribe development dominate the view. While there is a partial view of the gable end of an existing building within the subject site in the central background from this viewpoint, most of the structures within the subject site are screened by the buildings within the Gort na Coiribe residential area.

Proposed Changes and Visual Impact:

While there will continue to be partial views of the top floors of the proposed buildings from this location within the Gort na Coiribe development, much of the views into the subject site are screened by the existing buildings and tree planting within this development and along the northern boundary of the subject site.

During the construction phase the impact on views from this area will possibly be moderate and negative, due to the anticipated presence of site hoarding, construction cranes and lighting.

During the operational phase, while the proposed redeveloped structures will have a greater visual presence, there are established views of the existing buildings from this location within the adjoining lands and therefore it is anticipated impact on this view will be slight and negative.



Plate 1.7: Visual 4 – Existing



Plate 1.8: Visual 4 - Proposed

Visual 5: From the amenity pathway within Terryland Forest Park looking west

Existing View:

The eastern elevation, the entrance into the subject site and its associated planting are visible when looking west towards the subject site from this viewpoint along the amenity pathway that follows the edge of the expanse of planting that forms part of Terryland Forest Park. The tree and hedge planting that follows the northern and southern boundaries between the subject site and the Gort na Coiribe and Dun na Coiribe residential developments, are visible from this location, which screen much of the views into these two residential areas. The grass embankment between the Dun na Coiribe Road and the amenity pathway dominates the foreground from this viewpoint. From this viewpoint the grass embankment between the Dun na Coiribe Road and the amenity pathway dominates the foreground, with some partial views of the buildings within the Dun na Coiribe residential area visible in the background.

Proposed Changes and Visual Impact:

Due to the proposed vertical and lateral expansion of the existing structures within the subject site, much of the eastern façades of the proposed buildings will be visible from this location along the amenity pathway. The proposed stormwater detention basin that will be located within the open space area to the north of the pathway will also be visible.

Due to the presence of construction traffic, construction cranes and lighting during the construction phase of the proposed redevelopment, it has the potential to have a moderate, negative impact on views from this location.

When the subject lands are in the operational phase it is anticipated that the impact on views from this location will continue to be moderate and negative, as while the proposed tree planting when it matures will assist in screening views of the proposed structures and the development is consistent with existing developments in the wider area, there is a substantial increase in the visibility of structures from this location.



Plate 1.9: Visual 5 - Existing



Plate 1.10: Visual 5 - Proposed

Visual 6: From the amenity pathway within Terryland Forest Park looking north

Existing View:

From this viewpoint on the amenity pathway looking north towards the subject site, the grass embankment between the Dun na Coiribe Road and the amenity pathway, in addition to the timber fence, metal railing and stone archways that form the northern-eastern boundary of the Dun na Coiribe residential development, dominate the foreground. There are views of structures within the eastern most part of the subject site which includes the eastern part of main accommodation building, associated planting and the three linked two storey buildings in the north eastern part of the subject site. Views of the Gort na Coiribe residential development are limited to partial views of the building's roofs in the background, with much of the development screened by the existing vegetation along its southern boundary.

Proposed Changes and Visual Impact:

There will be expansive views of the eastern facades and partial views of the southern elevation of the proposed buildings, due to the lateral and vertical extensions to the existing structures within the subject site, from this location along the amenity pathway.

During the construction phase the impact on views from this area will possibly be moderate and negative, due to the anticipated increase in construction vehicles, the presence of site hoarding, construction cranes and lighting.

During the operational phase, while the proposed redeveloped buildings will have a greater visual presence from this location, it will be consistent with urban character of the wider area and the site's close proximity to Galway city centre and the impact on views from this location will be moderate and negative.



Plate 1.11: Visual 6 - Existing



Plate 1.12: Visual 6 - Proposed

Visual 7: From Dun na Coiribe road looking north

Existing View:

When looking north from this location along the Dun na Coiribe Road, the street tree planting, parking bays, boundary structures and buildings associated with the Dun na Coiribe residential area dominate the views. While the planting along the northern boundary of the Dun na Coiribe residential development screens much of the views into the subject site, there are partial views of the eastern most buildings within the Cúirt na Coiribe site. This viewpoint also permits partial views of buildings within the Gort na Coiribe residential development in background.

Proposed Changes and Visual Impact:

It is anticipated that there will be views of the most south-easterly elevation and partial views of the upper floors of the proposed structures near the southern boundary, however the existing street tree planting and the planting associated with the Dun na Coiribe development assist in screening much of the proposed redevelopment from this location.

Throughout the construction phase of this development, the presence of construction cranes, additional lighting, site hoarding and construction traffic have the potential to have a moderate, negative impact on views from this location. While the proposed redeveloped blocks will have a greater visual presence, it will be consistent with the character of the wider surrounding area, resulting in the impact on views from this location expected to be moderate and negative during the operational phase.



Plate 1.13: Visual 7 - Existing



Plate 1.11: Visual 7 - Proposed

Visual 8: From Dun na Coiribe road (entrance to residential development)

Existing View:

From this viewpoint at the entrance to the Dun na Coiribe residential development looking north towards the subject site, the the eastern most section of the accomodation buildings and the three rooftops of the linked two storey buildings are visible. Views into the subject site are partially screened by the dwellings and boundary treatments and planting within the adjoining residential development. The rooftop of a building within the Gort na Coiribe residential development to the north of the subject site is also visible in the background.

Proposed Changes and Visual Impact:

From this location along the Dun na Coiribe road it is expected that there will be views of the south-easterly elevations and partial views of the upper floors of southern block, while further views into the subject site are screened by the existing structures and planting within the northern section of the Dun na Coiribe development.

During the construction phase the impact on views from this location will possibly be moderate and negative, due to the anticipated increase in construction vehicles, the presence of site hoarding, construction cranes and lighting. While the proposed redeveloped blocks will have a greater visual presence, it will be consistent with the character of the wider surrounding area and the impact on views from this location with be moderate and negative during the operational phase.



Plate 1.15: Visual 8 - Existing



Plate 1.16: Visual 8 - Proposed

Visual 9: From N6 (at Terryland Retail Park) looking west

Existing View:

The eastern sections of the buildings, the amenity planting within the subject site and a portion of the upper floors of the Dun na Coiribe development, are visible from this location on the N6 at the Terryland Retail Park. The vegetation within the Terryland Forest Park and the dense planting along the western side of the N6 screen much of the views towards the Gort na Coiribe and Dun na Coiribe developments. The structures associated with the junction of the N6 and Dun na Coiribe Road, such as traffic lights, signage, traffic islands and railings dominate the foreground from this viewpoint.

Proposed Changes and Visual Impact:

Due to the proposed vertical and lateral expansion of the existing structures within the subject site, much of the eastern façades of the proposed buildings will be visible from this location along N6 at the junction with the Dun na Coiribe road.

Due to the presence of construction traffic, construction cranes and lighting during the construction phase of the proposed redevelopment, it has the potential to have a slight, negative impact on views from this location.

When the subject lands are in the operational phase it is anticipated that the impact on views from this location will continue to be slight and negative, as while the proposed and existing planting continues to mature and assist in screening views of the proposed structures and the development is consistent with the urban character of the surrounding area, it will be more visually prominent than the existing structures.



Plate 1. 17: Visual 9 - Existing



Plate 1. 18: Visual 9 - Proposed

Visual 10: From Headford Road (at Galway Shopping Centre) looking north-west

Existing View:

A commercial unit and boundary planting within Galway Retail Park, in addition to the vegetation within the Terryland Forest Park, screen views into subject from this location on the Headford Road looking north-west.

Proposed Changes and Visual Impact:

Due to the presence of the structures and boundary planting within the Galway Retail Park and the vegetation within the Terryland Forest Park, it is anticipated that the proposed structures within the subject site will not be visible from this location along the Headford Road.

Therefore, due to the lack of visibility into subject from this location, it is anticipated that the proposed development will have imperceptible and neutral effect, during the construction and operational phases.



Plate 1. 19: Visual 10 - Existing



Plate 1. 20: Visual 10 - Proposed

Visual 11: From Dyke Road (at Terryland Waterworks) looking south-east

Existing View:

The buildings, planting and structures including boundary treatments associated with the Terryland Waterworks dominate the foreground from this position along Dyke Road looking south-east towards the subject site. The vegetation within the undeveloped lands located between the Terryland Waterworks and the subject site and the hedge planting along the western boundary of the subject site screen views of the lower section of the existing buildings within the site. The western elevation of the third and fourth floors and rooftop of the existing buildings are visible in the background from this location.

Proposed Changes and Visual Impact:

Due to the proposed vertical and lateral expansion of the existing structures within the subject site, there will be partial views of the upper three floors of the proposed buildings along the western boundary of the subject site from this location along Dyke Road. However, much of the views into subject site are screened by the vegetation within the Terryland Waterworks site and the planting along the western boundary of the subject site.

During the construction phase the impact on views from this area will possibly be slight and negative, due to the anticipated presence of site hoarding, construction cranes and lighting. When the subject lands are in the operational phase it is anticipated that the impact on views from this location will continue to be slight and negative, as while the proposed tree planting when it matures will assist in screening views of the proposed structures and the development is consistent with existing developments in the wider area, there is a slight increase in the visibility of structures laterally and vertically from this location.



Plate 1. 21: Visual 11 - Existing



Plate 1. 22: Visual 11 - Proposed

Visual 12: From within the Dun na Coiribe residential development looking north-east

Existing View:

From this location within the Dun na Coiribe residential area looking north-east towards the subject site, the parking bays, amenity planting, services buildings and boundary tree planting associated with the development dominate the foreground. There are views of the roof level of the existing buildings within the subject site from this location and while the much of the lower parts of these structures are screened by the boundary planting, there is a partial view of the lower floors of a central structure.

Proposed Changes and Visual Impact:

While the existing vegetation along the northern boundary of the Dun na Coiribe development will provide partial screening of the proposed structures, due to lateral and vertical expansion of the existing structures there will be views of the upper two/three floors of the proposed buildings along the southern boundary.

Due to the presence of construction traffic, construction cranes, site hoarding and lighting during the construction phase of the proposed redevelopment, it has the potential to have a moderate, negative impact on views from this location. During the operational phase, while the proposed redeveloped structures will have a greater visual presence, there are established views of the existing buildings from this location within the adjoining lands and therefore it is anticipated impact on this view will be slight and negative.



Plate 1. 23: Visual 12 - Existing



Plate 1. 24: Visual 12 - Proposed

Visual 13: From the N6 at Terryland Forest Park overpass looking north-west

Existing View:

The carriageway, pedestrian and cycle paths and the road barrier and railing dominate the foreground from this location on the N6 looking north-west towards the subject site.

The vegetation within the Terryland Forest Park screen much of the views towards the Gort na Coiribe and Dun na Coiribe developments, however there are partial views of the eastern elevation and rooftops of the taller structures within the Cúirt na Coiribe development.

Proposed Changes and Visual Impact:

While the existing and proposed tree planting will assist in providing screening of the lower floors of the proposed structures, there will be views of the upper floors of the proposed buildings within the southern and eastern parts of the subject site.

Due to the presence of construction traffic, construction cranes, site hoarding and lighting during the construction phase of the proposed redevelopment, it has the potential to have a moderate, negative impact on views from this location. When the subject lands are in the operational phase it is anticipated that the impact on views from this location will continue to be moderate and negative, as while the proposed development does have an impact on its setting and the skyline from this location, it is consistent with existing developments in the surrounding area.



Plate 1. 25: Visual 13 - Existing



Plate 1. 26: Visual 13 - Proposed

1.5.5 Do Nothing Scenario

The Galway City Development Plan 2017-2023 indicates that the subject site is located with an area zoned as 'Residential' and within the 'Established Suburbs' zone. Due to the subject site's proximity to NUI Galway there is a continual increase in demand for student accommodation and due to the site being within walking distance of Galway city centre, there is also an enduring need for tourist accommodation.

Therefore, if the proposed redevelopment of the subject site which involves increasing the number of bedspaces, the property would continue to operate at its current level, but there would still be a increasing demand for student and tourist accommodation within this area, meaning possible development of greenfield sites or pressure on areas further away from the city.

1.6 Mitigation Measures

Consideration was given to the avoidance of impacts wherever possible during the design of the proposed scheme. However, as with any development some degree of impact is inevitable and wherever possible measures have been proposed to mitigate the adverse nature of these impacts.

1.6.1 Construction Phase

It is proposed that careful attention will be paid to avoiding any potentially adverse construction-related effects on the adjacent residences. Operating a well-managed, organised and planned construction site, with adequate control of construction traffic and working activity, is key to avoiding/minimising such impacts. In addition, any lighting required during the construction phase should be located sensitively to avoid unnecessary light spill into the surrounding residential areas.

1.6.2 Operational Phase

The careful and considered approach to the layout of the proposed development is to minimise negative visual impact both locally and from the wider surrounding area. The landscape strategy details the landscape proposals that will assist in mitigating the landscape and visual impacts of the proposed development: refer to landscape drawing 1479_300. The key objectives include:

- Retention of as much of the existing vegetation as possible and where tree removal is required to facilitate construction works or site development, replacement planting will take place where long-term tree growth is sustainable.
- Integration of the development into the surrounding area, minimising landscape and visual impact in particular upon nearby residential developments.
- Provide planting with integrated seating at the subject site's entrance, in order to mitigate against the visual impact of the development
- Provide amenity opportunities for the future residents
- Entrance, courtyard and peripheral lighting of pedestrian walkways will be by means of high quality, modern standing fixtures. They should include full cut-off (FCO), low level and energy efficient lighting where practicable to reduce the impacts of light pollution on the surrounding area.

Planting Specification:

Planting species will be selected from list of species outlined in Table 4, below:

| Indicative Planting Schedule - 1479_Cúirt na Coiribe, Galway | |
|---|-------------------------------|
| Name | Specification |
| Tree, multi-stem and whip planting will be selected from the following species list: | |
| Acer campestre | 14-16cm girth; RB; clear stem |
| Acer palmatum | 2-2.5m high; RB; multi-stem |
| Amelanchier lamarckii | 2-2.5m high; RB; multi-stem |
| Prunus avium | 14-16cm girth; RB; clear stem |
| Hedge Planting | |
| Buxus sempervirens | 25-30cm high; RB |
| Fagus sylvatica | 90-120cm high; BR; feathered |
| Ilex aquifolium | 80-100cm high; RB |
| Prunus lusitanica | 80-100cm high; RB |
| Shrub, Herbaceous & Ornamental Grass Planting | |
| <i>may include but not limited to the following:</i> | |
| Agapanthus 'Blue Umbrella'; 'Albus' | 3 litre; container grown |
| Alchemilla mollis | 3 litre; container grown |
| Allium 'Globemaster'; sphaerocephalon | 3 litre; container grown |
| Anemone 'Honorine Jobert'; 'Wild Swan' | 3 litre; container grown |
| Astilbe 'Fanal' | 3 litre; container grown |
| Carex 'Frosted Curls' | 3 litre; container grown |
| Choisya 'Aztec Pearl' | 3 litre; container grown |
| Crocsmia 'Ember Glow'; 'Lucifer' | 3 litre; container grown |
| Echinacea purpurea 'White Swan' | 3 litre; container grown |
| Geum 'Lady Stratheden' | 3 litre; container grown |
| Helleborus orientalis (white) | 3 litre; container grown |
| Lavandula ang. 'Hidcote' | 3 litre; container grown |
| Libertia grandiflora | 3 litre; container grown |
| Liriope muscari 'Monroe White' | 3 litre; container grown |
| Vinca minor 'Gertrude Jekyll' | 3 litre; container grown |
| Bulb Planting | |
| Allium hollandicum c. vars | 20-25 per meter |
| Anemone blanda | 20-25 per meter |
| Galanthus nivalis | 20-25 per meter |
| Narcissus c. vars (3 approx.) | 20-25 per meter |
| Tulipa 'White Triumphator' | 20-25 per meter |
| Amenity Grass Areas | |
| Grass Seed Mix to contain: | |
| 25% 'Talgo' Dwarf Perennial Ryegrass | |
| 25% 'Taya' Dwarf Perennial Ryegrass | |
| 30% 'Pernille' Strong Creeping Red Fescue | |
| 15% 'Agram' Chewings Fescue | |

| |
|---|
| 5% 'Highland' Browntop Bent as per Coburn's Urban Parks Mixture or approved equivalent. |
| All tree species must be accompanied by Irish Provenance Certificate |

Table 4: Indicative Planting Schedule

1.7 Residual Impacts

Given the planning policy for the area and the subject site's proximity to NUI Galway and Galway city centre, it is highly probable that redevelopment of this site will take place at some stage in the near future, and it is likely that any proposed viable redevelopment will give rise to impacts of a similar nature.

It is considered that the benefits of the proposed redevelopment will substantially outweigh the negative aspects of the proposal.

1.8 Monitoring

Monitoring, particularly during construction phase will be on an ongoing basis and will be crucial at certain stages such as:

- During site establishment stage– prior to any works taking place, clearly identify trees that are to be retained and protected – ensuring tree protection measures are then place as per BS5837: 2012 and clearly identify trees that are to be removed.
- During site excavation stage – ensure existing vegetation is being adequately protected and that topsoil is being correctly stripped and stored for landscape reinstatement.
- During construction stage: ensure that landscape proposals are being implemented correctly.
- Post-construction stage: periodic visits will be required to ensure that any defects that may occur are rectified, that the landscape proposals are successfully establishing and being correctly maintained.

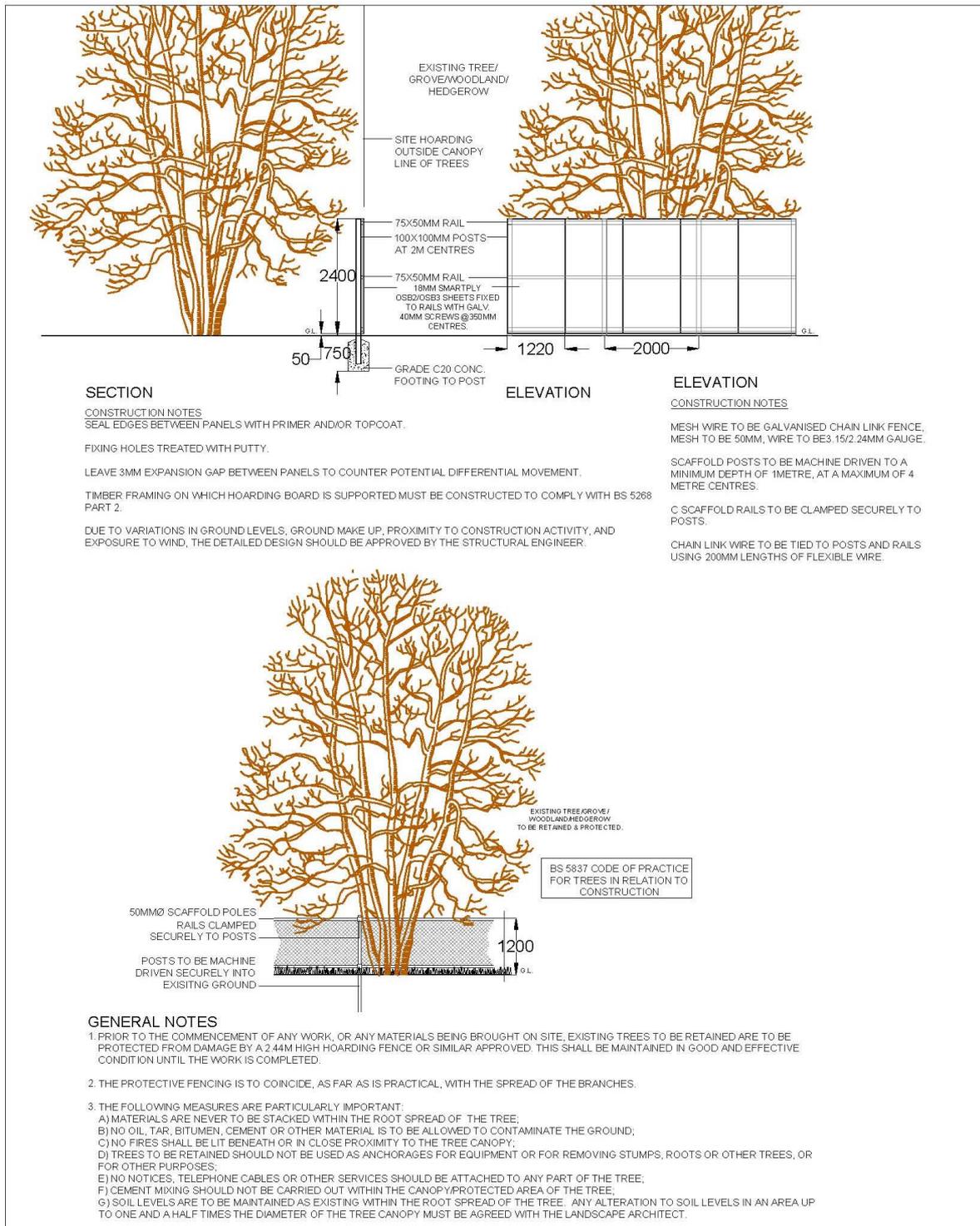
1.9 References

The following documents were referred to in relation to planning policies, objectives, statutory designations and visualisation in respect of the proposed site and the surrounding area:

- Galway City Development Plan 2017-2023
- Aerial photography
- Photomontages prepared by 3D Design Bureau
- Draft Guidelines on the information to be contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports (EPA, July 2017)
- Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (Landscape Institute & I.E.M.A., UK 2013)

Appendix 1.1

Tree & Hedgerow Protection Detail - NTS



Appendix 1.2

Appendix 1.2: Photomontages – Viewpoint Location Maps and Visuals

Viewpoint Location Map – Short Range Views



Viewpoint Location Map – Long Range Views



View 1 - Existing



View 1 - Proposed



View 2 - Existing



View 2 - Proposed



View 3 - Existing



View 3 - Proposed



View 4 - Existing



View 4 - Proposed



View 5 - Existing



View 5 - Proposed



View 6 - Existing



View 6 - Proposed



View 7 - Existing



View 7 - Proposed



View 8 - Existing



View 8 - Proposed



View 9 - Existing



View 9 - Proposed



View 10 - Existing



View 10 - Proposed



Outline of Proposed Development

View 11 - Existing



View 11 - Proposed



View 12: Existing



View 12: Proposed



View 13: Existing



View 13: Proposed



